

20 gram Soul

Friendly outgoing eclectic agnostic seeks one gram of soul

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September 15, 2008 | Church appologies to Darwin

Posted at 10:27 pm by Richard. Popularity: 32% [?]

I know it's been a while since I've posted anything here (loads of things going on giving me very little time to write!), but an article I read today really caught my eye. The [Church of England is going to officially apologise to Darwin](#) for "misunderstanding (him) and, by getting (their) first reaction wrong, encouraging others to misunderstand (him) still".

While this is certainly a very late appology, and only a tiny step in the right direction, I can't help but wonder how this might affect the disturbing popularity of creationism. While I obviously don't agree with many (if not all) of the views of the Christian churches, they're in a much more powerful position to fight against creationism than any secular or atheist organisation. I certainly don't expect the church to come around in another 126 years and say they were wrong about God existing, but if we can at least aim to weed out the most dangerous beliefs, perhaps rational thought might have some hope of a future.

Popularity: 32% [?]

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March 16, 2008 | How Small We Are

Posted at 2:10 pm by Richard and tagged [carl sagan](#), [creation](#), [earth](#), [galaxy](#), [monty python](#), [pale blue dot](#), [stars](#), [sun](#), [universe](#). Popularity: 66% [?]

I find one of the most arrogant claims that religion makes is that we are somehow special – the "centre of the universe", so to speak. While (most) religions have rejected the idea that the earth is the centre of our solar system, the very idea that the creator of the universe would single out one small planet in some distant corner of his creation to be "special" seems absurdly arrogant. Carl Sagan describes this arrogance as "our imagined self-importance", and "the delusion that we have some privileged position in the universe". While I think Sagan's description still remains the greatest demonstration of how insignificant we really are (with [Monty Python](#) coming a close second), I saw this picture just recently which I though demonstrated it quite well too:



I'm sure anyone who visits this site has already seen Carl Sagan's "Pale Blue Dot", but I'm going to post it here again anyway, because it always manages to put me in my place each time I watch it.

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Can anyone honestly say that “God” created all of this just for us?

Popularity: 66% [?]

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October 21, 2007 | Organised Atheism

Posted at 9:00 am by Richard and tagged [abba](#), [atheism](#), [belief](#), [chocolate](#), [coming-out](#), [god](#), [labels](#), [nothing](#), [richard-dawkins](#), [sam-harris](#), [spice-girls](#).
Popularity: 100% [?]

I’ve been holding off talking about [Richard Dawkins’ “Out Campaign”](#) for a while (yes, it’s probably all died down by now – you’ve either got a scarlet “A” on your t-shirt, website, car and baby, or you don’t) because I still haven’t figured out what I really think about it. On one hand, I applaud the effort to bring atheists together and to “out” themselves, but on the other, I [still see the label “Atheist” as useful as “non-chocolate lover”](#) or non-spice girls fan¹.



Of course, the use of the word “atheist” (and therefore the need to “out” oneself) has been stirred up recently by [Sam Harris at an Atheist Alliance conference in Washington](#)² – there are no “non-racists”, so “why are we defining ourselves by something that should simply be the case”³?

Every political or social group have certain beliefs and/or interests in common. A football team shares a love of sports, and possibly a belief that football is a worthwhile pursuit. A political group might share certain values and beliefs about how a society should function. A religion, well, they often share beliefs about a great many things: politics, sexuality, family values, etc. But more importantly – they share a belief in a supernatural being (or spirit, or afterlife, etc.).

What do atheists share? Nothing. Many of us can’t even agree on a [definition of Atheism](#)! I don’t mean to say that there’s nothing that we share, but what we *do* share is, quite literally, “nothing” – we share a nonexistent thing⁴: a lack of a belief in God. While this probably gives us a more common understanding of God than most religious people (even within the same religion or denomination, it seems every person has their own understanding of exactly what or who God is), this doesn’t seem to be a great foundation for an alliance.

Am I going to “come out”, well – yes, and no. I am without religion. I am,

therefore, an atheist. I am also without racism, and am therefore non-racist. I have never killed anyone, and am therefore a non-murderer.

further have no love for chocolate⁵, no love of ABBA or the [Spice Girls](#) and most certainly no belief in fairies or celestial teapots. If you wish to define me by any of these “labels”, feel free – but I certainly don’t.


Popularity: 100% [?]

1. Harris explains it much better than I could on [his website](#) [↗]
2. Partial transcript available at [Washington Post](#) [↗]
3. Hemant Mehta (Oct 1, 2007) [Atheist Alliance International Convention 2007 \(Recap\)](#) [↗]
4. [Nothing](#) (n) A nonexistent thing [↗]
5. I wonder if coming out as an atheist, or an non-chocoholic would create more of a stir? [↗]

  Permalink  4 Comments

October 14, 2007 |

God is Dead: Death, Nietzsche and Atheism

 Posted at 9:00 am by Richard and tagged death, eternity, funeral, joseph-brisendine, life, Nietzsche, philosophy, podcast, wedding. Popularity: 96% [?]

It seems common to think that Atheists cannot have a positive outlook on life, because the non-existence of god somehow denies life of any meaning.

I recently attended a funeral (not someone I knew, but I was there to support the family) followed closely by a wedding. And then, as if it was all part of some higher plan (irony intended), I find myself listening to [this podcast](#) which I downloaded a while ago, but hadn’t got around to listening to yet.



The funeral certainly reminded me of death (which, one might imagine, might be an unpleasant thing to think about), but because of my recent “brush with death”, I was able to appreciate the wedding so much more. Knowing that life will end (and will *not* go on forever, as many religious people might hope for) made the celebration much *more* special that it might have been otherwise. As Joseph Brisendine explains in the podcast – how long could you have a orgasm for before it became boring? Life is wonderful precisely *because* it ends.


===== If we were to “transcend” death, and live in a “perfect place” for eternity, nothing in this life would be special or have meaning, because we’d always be longing for this “other world”. And isn’t this exactly what religion teaches us? Religion (at least the Abrahamic ones, and probably most others) teach of an “after” life, which is supposed to be much grander and more fulfilling than this life ever can be.

It is claimed that without “God”, life cannot have purpose, but Nietzsche suggests (at least, Brisendine talking about Nietzsche) that it is only *without* God that this life can have any meaning.

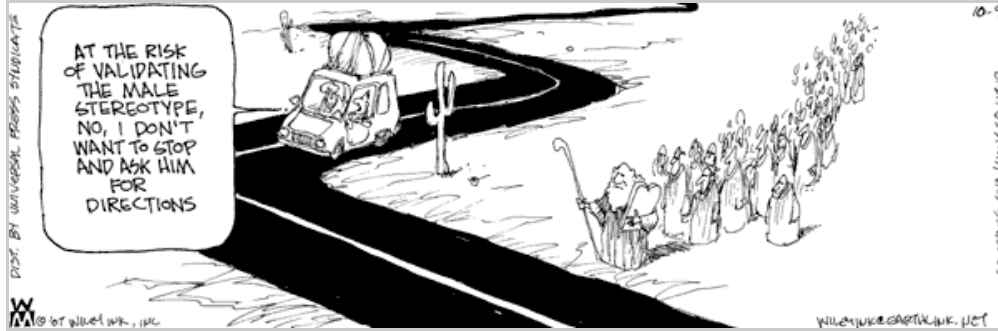
Popularity: 96% [?]

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October 11, 2007 | **Asking for Directions**

 Posted at 1:03 pm by Richard and tagged directions, humour, moses, non-sequitur. Popularity: 93% [?]

Non Sequitor seem to come out with some good religious-themed comics. Here’s another one to add to the list.



Popularity: 93% [?]

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October 8, 2007 | Christianity 2.0

Posted at 11:09 pm by Richard and tagged bible, bling, christianity, gadgets, humour, lolcats, technology, usb. Popularity: 99% [?]

Good to see religion doesn't necessarily mean being stuck in the dark ages. Now if someone can just update the bible, we'd be set.

Oh wait, [that's being done](#) too...



Popularity: 99% [?]

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